Newsletter **2025**



tilda
Staidéar Fadaimseartha na hÉireann um Dhul in Aois
The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

WHO Collaborating Centre for Longitudinal Studies on Ageing and the Life Course

Dear Participant,

As 2025 draws to a close, I want to thank you sincerely for your continued support and commitment to TILDA.



This year has been significant, marked by the launch of the **TILDA Wave 6 Report: Shaping the Future – Longitudinal Trends and Opportunities for Transformation in Health and Social Care in Ireland**, our most comprehensive to date, drawing on 14 years of your data to reveal major trends in Irish health, wellbeing, and caregiving.

Inside this issue, you can read more about these findings, our latest research on healthy ageing and dementia prevention, and meet Dr Mirela Conica, who is exploring how creativity supports flourishing in later life.



We look forward to sharing more milestones with you. With warm wishes for a peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Professor Rose Anne Kenny & the TILDA Team

Key Findings 2025

Wave 6 Report Launch – Shaping the Future of Ageing in Ireland

In September 2025, TILDA launched its momentous publication: **TILDA Wave 6 Report: Shaping the Future – Longitudinal Trends and Opportunities for Transformation in Health and Social Care in Ireland**. Drawing on 14 years of data from over 8,000 participants, the report provides critical insights into what it means to grow older in Ireland.



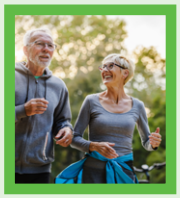
Key Findings Shaping Policy:



- **Loneliness Trends:** Loneliness rates, which surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels, though tackling persistent isolation remains vital for mental health.



- **Unmet Health Needs:** The report identifies a significant number of older adults remaining undiagnosed or under-treated for conditions such as hypertension, high cholesterol, depression, and chronic pain.



- **Healthy Ageing:** Utilising the international 4Ms Framework (Mobility, Medications, Mentation, and What Matters), the data reveals that while women live longer than men, they experience more years with health challenges.



- **Carers' Burden:** Older adults providing substantial care (over 50 hours per week) report significantly poorer mental health and wellbeing, with women disproportionately affected.

The report's findings are already shaping national health and social care policy. The launch event in Dublin brought together key policymakers, researchers, and advocates, reinforcing TILDA's central role in evidence-based policy. Widespread press coverage across The Irish Times, Irish Independent, The Journal, and The Irish Examiner confirmed the report as our most policy-relevant publication to date, setting a new standard for engagement with important stakeholders.

Scan or click the QR code to view the Wave 6 Report →

Data Collection – Wave 7 and Wave 8 Update

Wave 7 data collection is nearing completion and will wrap up over the next few months. We extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated this year.

Wave 8 planning is already underway and will include more feedback than ever before. Starting in 2027, Wave 8 will feature a full health assessment and exciting updates, including a new hearing test and a brand-new personalised health report so you can track changes in your wellbeing over time.

We are actively consulting with stakeholders and participant representative groups to ensure the Wave 8 questionnaire reflects the realities and priorities of ageing in Ireland today.

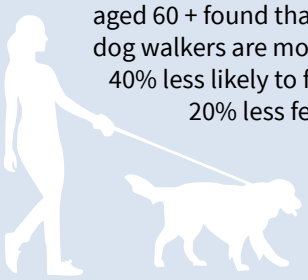
Your continued involvement helps us understand how Ireland ages and what truly matters in people's lives. Together, we are shaping a future of improved health, wellbeing, and policy that benefits everyone at every stage of life.



Pictured left to right: Dr Ann Leahy (Family Carers Ireland), Dr Robert Briggs (TILDA), Dr Christing McGarrigle (TILDA), Dr Emer Ahern, Regius Professor Rose Anne Kenny (TILDA), Professor Cathal McCrory (TILDA), Dr Aileen O'Reilly (ALONE), Dr Colm Henry (Chief Clinical Officer, HSE) and Dr Mark Ward (TILDA).

Other Research Highlights

Dog Walking Boosts Mobility and Confidence



TILDA research on 4,100 participants aged 60 + found that regular dog walkers are more mobile, 40% less likely to fall, and 20% less fearful of falling. Dog walking offers not only physical benefits but companionship and purpose: key ingredients for healthy ageing.

Addressing Dementia Risk Factors

A 12-year TILDA study published in BMJ Open reveals that over 70 % of adults 50 + in Ireland have at least four treatable dementia risk factors such as high blood pressure, hearing loss, and inactivity. Researchers estimate that over 100,000 cases of dementia could have been prevented during the study period if these risks were addressed. The findings highlight an urgent need for a national brain health strategy and greater access to screening and prevention programmes.

Tooth Loss Predicts Higher Mortality Risk in Older Irish Adults

TILDA research on 8,494 older adults found that complete tooth loss (edentulism) is an independent predictor of all-cause mortality over 12 years. Those with tooth loss had a 42% increased risk of death. This risk was significantly higher for respiratory and cancer mortality. The findings highlight that oral health is a critical component of systemic health and essential for developing public health policies that improve life-course trajectories.



Grip Strength Tests at the RDS 50 Plus Expo 2025.



Dr Niall Costello chatting to the Provost at the European Researcher's Night Event.



Holly Ritchie with Cathy Masie at the Connecting Generations event

Public Engagement & Awards

TILDA had another dynamic year of outreach:

- **TILDA Connects with Community at 50 Plus Expo:** TILDA showcased its research at the event with a busy stand offered visitors grip strength tests, providing direct insights into muscle health. Our team discussed findings, emphasizing the importance of TILDA's research in enriching the lives and well-being of older adults.



- **European Researchers' Night 2025:** Visitors in Trinity's Front Square tried fun ageing tests, and a new Lifestyle & Ageing Game illustrated how daily habits shape long-term health.

Dr Siobhan Scarlett and TILDA PhD students Brenda Ozeias Santos and Katie Duffy at the TILDA stand.

- **Connecting Generations Student Awards:** TILDA's inaugural awards celebrated intergenerational creativity and understanding. Generously supported by the MASIE Learning Foundation, the event explored the theme of ageing and connection through student submissions in writing, film, and art. Winners Holly Ritchie and Charlotte Connolly were recognised for work exploring civic engagement and Dublin's rowing community.



Elliott Masie, Professor Joe Harbison, Professor Cliona O'Farrelly, Regis Professor Rose Anne Kenny, Cathy Masie, Dr Mirela Conica, Dr Paul Delaney, Dr Deirdre O'Connor

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Researcher Spotlight - Mirela Conica



Dr Mirela Conica is a psychologist who joined TILDA in Autumn of this year as a Research Fellow. Her work will centre on Flourishing and the Arts in Ageing. Here we ask Mirela about what she will be working on and what makes her tick:

Q: What drew you to this area of research?



A: I've always been interested in what helps people thrive, not just avoid illness. The arts are powerful because they combine emotion, connection, and expression — all central to wellbeing.

Q: What will you be studying at TILDA?

A: I'm investigating how creative and cultural participation — visiting museums, painting, attending concerts — relates to flourishing, which means living with purpose, happiness, and good health.

Q: What do you hope your research will achieve?

A: Using TILDA's rich data, we aim to identify how arts engagement supports cognitive, psychological, and social wellbeing. Ultimately, we hope this work will inform policies that encourage creative opportunities for all generations.

Q: Why is this important for Ireland's ageing population?

A: Ireland is leading the way in promoting creative ageing. Our findings can help make Ireland the best place in the world to grow old — where creativity, community, and wellbeing go hand-in-hand.

Stay connected

Update your contact details (address, phone, or email)

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Impact & Recognition

Pictured left to right: Dr Ann Hever, Dr Siobhan Scarlett, Dr Ann Monaghan and Joseph McDonnell.



- **TILDA-VISTA**, launched in August 2025, is a pioneering Trusted Research Environment that allows secure, remote data access for EU researchers. This first-of-its-kind University-Based platform ensures data is FAIR — Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable — and accelerates collaborative ageing research.



- We also celebrated Dr Ann Monaghan, TILDA Project Manager and recipient of **the Dean's Award for Exemplary Performance**, recognising her leadership in Wave 7, interviewer training, and the Frailty Education Programme.

Pictured: Dr Ann Monaghan and Prof Brian O'Connell.

- **"Reel Ageing": Invest in Your Future Self, Now**

  TILDA's new "Reel Ageing" video series leverages our data to empower health choices. Targeting young adults (20s/30s) these dynamic guides focus on four key modifiable lifestyle habits that predict future vitality. This initiative ensures TILDA's life-course research drives positive societal change.

Scan or click the QR code to visit the landing page →

Funders - TILDA is supported by:

An Roinn Sláinte Department of Health · Health Research Board · The Atlantic Philanthropies · Taighde Éireann Research Ireland · NIH National Institutes of Health · HRCI Health Research Charities Ireland · Family Carers Ireland · Cliar Eile Eólaíoch Country Ireland Programme

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